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S P E E C H
OF
HON. JAMES S. ROLLINS,
OF MISSOURI,
ON
THE REBELLION.

DELIVERED IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, APRIL 24, 1862.

Mr. MORRILL, of Vermont. I move that the rules be suspended, and that the House resolve itself into the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, for the purpose of giving the gentleman from Missouri, (Mr. ROLLINS,) an opportunity of making his speech, and any other gentlemen who desire to be heard. I shall propose to take up House bill No 413.

The motion was agreed to.

So the rules were suspended; and the House accordingly resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole on the state of the Union, (Mr. WALTON, of Vermont, in the chair.)

On motion of Mr. MORRILL, of Vermont, the committee proceeded to the consideration of the bill (H. R. No. 413) making an appropriation for the payment of the bounty to widows and legal heirs of volunteers who have died or may die, or have been killed or may be killed in service, as provided in the act of July 22, 1861.

Mr. ROLLINS, of Missouri, addressed the committee as follows:

Mr. CHAIRMAN: I feel deeply indebted to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. MORRILL) for his generous courtesy, in submitting the motion to go into Committee of the Whole, at this time, in order to enable me to speak upon the subject of our present national troubles. I propose to make an old-fashioned, patriotic speech, and whilst not intended as an answer to, will follow appropriately, I trust, the very remarkable and vindictive speech to which we have been compelled to-day to listen, from the gentlemen from Illinois, (Mr. LOVEJOY.) In the brief hour allowed to me by the rules of the House, I shall not attempt, to any extent, the discussion of those great constitutional questions which have grown out of the present rebellion. I shall content myself by stating frankly the impressions made upon my own mind, and the opinions formed by the changed circumstances which surround us, and with such appropriate allusion to the causes of our great troubles, and the remedy for them, as the occasion seems to suggest.

Perhaps in all history no more melancholy spectacle was ever presented to the gaze of men than that which we have looked upon in this country during the last twelve months. A great nation hitherto blessed beyond that of any other people of ancient or modern times, with a Constitution and form of government at once the wonder and admiration of mankind, without a public debt, and almost free from taxation, enjoying a degree of civil and religious liberty never attained by any other nation, having the benefits of moral and intellectual culture diffused among all the masses of the people, great in all the elements of national power, in the supposed intelligence, virtue, and patriotism of the people, in commerce, in manufactures, in agriculture, in art, literature,

and science, and bidding fair to rival the proudest nation of all the earth; our armies invincible at home, our navies riding upon every sea! Such, Mr. Chairman, is a fair presentation of the condition of our country one short year ago. But how changed the scene! In the place of peace, prosperity, and happiness, we find ourselves engaged in civil strife; the hostile tread of armed men is heard on every side; the nation is convulsed from centre to circumference with great and warlike preparations; the clash of arms is heard throughout the land, and blood is made to flow on a hundred battle-fields, and our national existence is threatened with overthrow. It is a fearful question. Who and what has caused this sudden and unexpected change? Where were our wise men and prudent legislators, that whatever causes of discontent existed might not have been removed? Upon the Administration of James Buchanan and the Thirty-Sixth Congress rests the fearful responsibility of permitting the present fearful state of things to exist; and in all time to come the closing days of his Administration, and the action of that Congress, will be regarded as the darkest period in American history.

Mr. Chairman, I belong to that class of men who believe that it is far better to settle all questions of national difficulty by an appeal to reason and to the ballot-box rather than by the arbitrament of arms; and I am sincere in the reflection that, considering the boasted civilization of the American people, the present civil war must be regarded in all time to come as a scandal and disgrace to the age in which we live, and the authors of it, when the passions of the present hour shall have subsided, in the judgment of posterity will be considered as the moral monsters of this generation, and the worst foes to free institutions and the cause of well-regulated liberty among men.

This rebellion is one of the legitimate fruits of the excesses to which party spirit has been carried in this country, and of the continued and fierce agitation of the question of African slavery; the loss of political power furnishing a motive to ambitious men to put it on foot, and the slavery question being the moving power by which they hoped to excite and enlist the sympathies and the services of the great body of the southern people. The national Government having fallen into the hands of a weak and vacillating President, his Cabinet composed in part of the conspirators themselves—bold, reckless, and unscrupulous—using their ill-gotten power to encourage the purposes of disloyalty and precipitate national disaster; whilst the people, shocked and amazed, and yet incredulous as to the wicked objects which these men had in view, the rebellion at the outset met with a degree of success and encouragement, causing thousands of good men to doubt the ability of the Government to check its progress and to overthrow those who had taken up arms against it. Never did a free people enter more reluctantly into an unwilling contest than did the loyal people of the United States with the disunionists of the South, who “forced this war upon the country.” It was not until State after State had broken their plighted faith and violated all the obligations of the Federal Constitution, in passing ordinances of secession, not until the Federal Treasury had been robbed, our arsenals and armories despoiled of their arms, our ships sent to distant seas, armies raised to resist the authority of the General Government, peaceful vessels fired into, and a weak and beleaguered garrison compelled to surrender, that the national Government took the first step to exert its authority and to maintain the supremacy of the laws and the Federal Constitution. Never in the history of the world was so much forbearance displayed by a great Government towards those in rebellion against it, and who were plotting its overthrow.

The purpose from the beginning was to break up the Government. For more than a quarter of a century a great party, founded upon the most pernicious theories, and denying the most obvious and direct teachings of the Federal

Constitution, as found in the letter as well as in the spirit of that instrument, and its contemporaneous exposition by the authorized departments of the Government, as well as by the great minds of the nation most competent to expound it, have been seeking pretexts to divide and dismember the Confederacy. Checked in their purposes of disloyalty by that man of iron will, Andrew Jackson, in 1832, and relieved from the dangerous predicament in which they found themselves placed at that time by the generous and liberal statesmanship of Henry Clay, they have lost no opportunity since to sow the seed of discord and encourage and foment a spirit of disloyalty and opposition to the authority of the Federal Government. Starting out originally in their crusade upon the tariff question, they readily relinquished it for one of a more excitable character, and in regard to which the "southern heart could be more easily fired." Receiving all the aid which they desired from another class of men, little less dangerous and no better than themselves, and equally intent upon mischief—men who act upon the motto of "*no union with slaveholders*," and who have inscribed upon their banner that the Constitution of the United States is a "*covenant with death and an agreement with hell*;" who have done all in their power to obstruct and to prevent the execution of the Federal laws in the northern States; who have inspired a spirit of hatred among their own people against the South and southern institutions; who prefer to see the Union broken if slavery be not abolished—it is not to be wondered at that the leaders of this "infamous rebellion," representing the opinions of these "fanatical men," as the voice of the northern people, and urging upon them the false idea that it was the purpose to interfere with and destroy one of their institutions in the southern States, without regard to the guarantees thrown around it in the Federal Constitution, have so far succeeded in enlisting beneath their banner so many well-meaning but deluded followers. Instead of seeking redress through the mode pointed out in the Constitution itself, for any grievances of which they had a right to complain, by asking an amendment of that instrument, they seized upon the election of Abraham Lincoln as President, although fairly chosen, and according to all the forms of law, by a majority of the freemen of the nation, to carry into effect their unpatriotic and hellish purposes. Even before he was inaugurated, before any step had been taken by him calculated to produce alarm or to indicate that he intended in any way to interfere with the legal and constitutional rights of southern men, and in the face of the resolution, constituting a part of the platform of the party that elected him, this rebellion is set on foot, and before the 4th day of March, 1861, seven out of fifteen southern States had passed ordinances of secession, and erected another government within the boundaries of the Republic.

Mr. Chairman, I denounce this as a most causeless and infamous rebellion. I have regarded it as such from the beginning, and as involving a greater degree of turpitude and crime than any other attempted revolution in the world's history. I do not pretend to deny that there were causes of irritation and discontent; that a large portion of the northern people had acted in bad faith in not yielding to, and carrying out in good faith, the true spirit and purposes of the Federal Constitution in regard to the rendition of fugitive slaves. But these things furnished no justification to these ambitious men for starting a rebellion like this. And especially was it a most wicked and unjustifiable step on the part of South Carolina and the other extreme southern States by which she was encouraged, and all of whose citizens had not suffered as much in any disturbance of their rights of property as the citizens of one single county of the district that I have the honor to represent on this floor.

Mr. Chairman, I have said that these grievances ought to have been settled; our bleeding country feels the truth of this remark to-day. In a spirit of fraternity and union, and led by the same noble and elevated sentiments of patri-

riotism which guided and controlled the fathers of the Republic in the formation of the Federal Constitution, they would have been settled. Surely, sir, there is not a man holding a seat here, or in the nation, and who is governed by the noble instincts of patriotism and humanity, who would not to-day have preferred the adoption of the compromise offered by my venerable friend who sits before me, [Mr. CRITTENDEN,] or that offered by the gentleman from Illinois, [Mr. KELLOGG,] or, indeed, either of the compromises offered in the Thirty-Sixth Congress, to the present lamentable state of things by which we find ourselves surrounded. I hear men frequently denounce all compromise; but, sir, what is government itself but a compromise of conflicting opinions? How would our own matchless form of government ever have been instituted except by conciliation and compromise? How would the little State of Rhode Island, so ably and so honorably represented here, exert the same influence in the other end of the capital, in the legislation of the country, as the great State of New York, except for the spirit of compromise and concession which controlled and guided the framers of the Federal Constitution? If such men as George Washington and John Hancock, Thomas Jefferson and John Adams, could meet in council together in devising and framing a system of government for themselves and their posterity, in comparing and yielding their preconceived individual sentiments, in order to form a Constitution adapted to the wants and necessities and varied and discordant interests and dissimilar institutions of the then thirteen colonies, there is no reason why the men of this generation, who have profited so much by the labors and sacrifices of these great and good men, should not follow their example, and, in a spirit of peace and conciliation, make to each other such concessions as are demanded by the growth, the practical necessities, and the more enlarged and varied interests of the entire country. In all this, there would have been no sacrifice either of truth or principle. And but for this yielding of preconceived notions, we might not, and would not have been blessed with the noble form of government under which we live, and which has been and can only be preserved in all future time by listening to the admonitions and following the wise example of those who framed it. We have heard much about clinging to an idea. The gentleman from Maine [Mr. FESSENDEN] tells us that he honors the men of "an idea to which they cling with the tenacity of death!" Sir, the men of the American Revolution were pre-eminently men of ideas; but they thought that it was not best to cling with such tenacity to a "single idea" as to endanger the great purpose which they had in view—the founding on this continent of a Government dedicated to the principles of civil and religious liberty.

If the doctrine of which we now hear so much, "no Union with slaveholders," no Union without emancipation, had been proclaimed and adhered to in the convention that framed the Constitution, we all know that the Government under which we live would never have been established. An attempt, on the part of the general Government, to enforce the same thing now will be equally fatal to the cause of the Union. It is the province of wisdom to deal with things as we find them. There is no practical statesmanship in clinging to "an idea," and thereby endangering the very existence of the Government. Men who cling with such tenacity to "an idea" may mean well, but they cannot be safe counsellors in times like these, when all that we hold dear is so deeply imperiled. Such men are well described in the following extract which I recently met with in an interesting book, and which I cordially commend to the gentleman from Maine, and also the gentleman from Illinois, (Mr. LOVEJOY,) and those who act with them:

"Among the objects of interest very often, if not always, to be found at the foot of dams and cataracts, are what are called 'pot holes.' They are round holes worn in the solid rock by a single stone kept in motion by the water. Some of them are very large,

and others are small. When the stream becomes dry there they are, smooth as if turned out by machinery, and the hard round pebbles at the bottom by which the curious work was done. Every year, as the dry season comes along, we find that the holes have grown larger, and the pebbles smaller, and that no freshet has been found powerful enough to dislodge the pebbles and release the rock from its attrition.

"Now, if a man will turn from the contemplation of one of these 'pot holes,' and the means by which it is made, and seek for that result and that process in the world of mind, which most resemble them, I am sure that he will find them in a man of one 'idea.' In truth, these scenes that I have been painting were all recalled to me by looking upon one of these men, studying his character, and watching the effect of the 'single idea' by which he was actuated. 'There,' said I involuntarily, 'is a moral pot hole with a pebble in it, and the hole grows larger and the pebble smaller every year.'

"I suppose it is useless to undertake to reform men of 'one idea.' The real trouble is that the pebble is in them, and whole freshets of truth are poured upon them only with the effect to make it more lively in its grinding, and more certain in its process of wearing out itself and them. The little man who, when ordered by his physician to take a quart of medicine, informed him with a deprecatory whimper that he did not hold but a pint, illustrates the capacity of many of those who are subjects of a 'single idea.' They do not hold but one, and it would be useless to prescribe a larger number. In a country like ours, in which everything is new, and every body is free, there are multitudes of self-constituted doctors, each of whom has a nostrum for curing all physical and moral disorders and diseases—a patent process by which humanity may achieve its proudest progress and its everlasting happiness. The country is full of hobby riders, booted and spurred, who imagine they are leading a grand race to a golden goal, forgetful of the truth that their steeds are tethered to a single idea, around which they are revolving only to tread down the grass, and wind themselves up, where they may stand at last amid the world's ridicule, and stoned to death."

Mr. Chairman, I have been taught to believe that the true theory of our Government is, that "the Federal Constitution and the laws passed in pursuance thereof" are the "supreme law of the land." Any other view would produce an endless conflict, and it is the opposite doctrine of those who attempt to exalt the States above the General Government, and the pressing of these claims to an extreme length, which has been largely instrumental in bringing about the present disastrous state of things. Our first and paramount allegiance is due to the General Government. In his great speech on the compromise measures of 1850, Henry Clay used the following language:

"If any one State, or any one portion of the people of any State, choose to place themselves in array against the Government of the Union, *I am for trying the strength of this Government.*" I am for ascertaining whether we have a Government or not, practicable, efficient, capable of maintaining its authority, and upholding the powers and interests which belong to a Government. Nor, sir, am I to be alarmed or dissuaded from any such course by intimations of the spilling of blood. If blood is to be spilt, by whose fault is it to be spilt? Upon the supposition, I maintained, it will be the fault of those who choose to raise the standard of disunion, and endeavor to prostrate the Government. And, sir, when that is done, so long as it pleases God to give me a voice to express my sentiments, or an arm, weak and enfeebled as it may be by age, that voice and that arm will be on the side of my country, for the support of the general authority, and for the maintenance of the powers of the Union." * * * * *

If Kentucky to-morrow unfurls the banner of resistance, I never will fight under that banner, I owe a paramount allegiance to the whole Union—a subordinate one to my own State.—HENRY CLAY, in the Senate, 1850.

I stand upon this doctrine to-day. It is based upon the true theory of our Government. And when Missouri, or any other State, shall raise the standard of rebellion, I shall feel that my primary allegiance is due to the General Government. And if in a conflict of this kind the nation is involved in war, as it now is, and blood be shed, let the responsibility rest where it properly belongs, on those who have commenced the contest in striking the first blow and firing the first gun. And if disaster and ruin shall follow the interests and institutions of those who have thus involved the nation in an unfortunate and bloody contest to maintain its own existence, I have that confidence in the courage and integrity of the masses that they will, in due season, visit upon the heads

of the guilty authors of those troubles that punishment which they so justly merit. Acquiescence in the election of Mr. Lincoln, and which was the patriotic duty of every citizen of the Republic, would have saved us all the fearful struggle and all the sacrifices which we have been compelled, individually and as a nation, to make. If he had erred in his administrative duties, the party in power, by an appeal to the intelligence and patriotism of the people, would only have had a brief existence of four years.

That no great harm could have befallen any particular interest, is known by the fact that every other department of the Government stood politically opposed to him, and with a majority in each House of Congress. But the "fiat" had gone forth. Demagogues and traitors had partially prepared the public mind, and they were ready to enter upon their bloody experiment. And what was the Government to do? Must it yield to the demand of these maddened leaders? Must the nation's life be sacrificed, and without an effort to preserve it? Shall our nationality be destroyed, and the Government of the United States struck from the map of the nations of the earth? Shall we be placed in the condition of a second-rate Power? Shall we give up the prestige and glory of our great name? Shall we be unmindful of the hallowed memories of the past, and our great obligations of the future?

Sir, men might as well have looked for the great luminary of day to be struck from the heavens without a convulsion in the material world, or the cross of our Saviour to be darkened and obscured without a pang to the heart of Christianity, as to have seen this great nation, now known and honored throughout all the earth, to die without a struggle more terrible than any which the world has witnessed since the "morning stars sang sweetly together." There was but one course for the President of the United States to pursue—meet the obligations of his oath, "to take care that the laws were faithfully executed," and to the best of his ability "preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States;" and in the discharge of these high and imperative duties he was entitled to the sympathy and support of every loyal and patriotic citizen of the Republic. No partisan zeal, no past or present difference of opinion on mere political topics, no hostility to supposed extreme theories held by the party in power, no sickly or morbid sympathy with those who were aiming a fatal stab at the nation's heart, ought to have prevented us from coming to the rescue, and saving the life of the Republic.

Sir, it is idle to say that in meeting this great crisis the President has violated the Constitution of his country. It may be that, in some instances, doubtful powers may have been exercised, and the Constitution not strictly observed. But who caused these things? And with what bad grace does an objection of this kind come from the lips of those who, disregarding all the precepts of our beloved Washington, as contained in his Farewell Address, and the teachings of the great and good men of all parties throughout the history of the Republic, with sacrilegious hands, have torn in shreds *the very charter of our liberties*? Who put in peril the existence of the nation, and by their act threatened to turn back the tide of civilization and of moral and intellectual progress upon the continent? How can these men who have attempted to tear up the tree of liberty, root and branch, complain of those who, in order to preserve it, have only plucked a twig here and there from its ample boughs? Sir, it was either unconditional surrender to rebellion, and thus permit the nation to die, or *to resist it* with all the power which the Constitution had lodged in the hands of the President, in order to "defend, preserve and protect it!" And, sir, whatever may be the judgment of the present hour, the gratitude of the nation and of mankind will be due to those who may save the Republic from overthrow.

Lovers of peace, looking with dread and horror upon the fratricidal conflict

which now pierces their hearts with agony, were willing to let the seceded States go, in the vain hope that this might have prevented the shedding of blood! and under the influence of the "sober second thought" they might have returned. Vain delusion! There *could* be no such thing as peaceable secession. Listen to that man of great renown, the favorite son of *New England*, but whose fame has added to his country's glory:

"Peaceable secession! Peaceable secession! Sir, your eyes and mine are not destined to see that miracle? The dismemberment of this vast country without convulsion! The breaking up of the great fountains of the deep without rippling the surface!"

More than twenty-three hundred years ago, in one of the Republics of the Old World, the impolicy of secession, was clearly shown. That distinguished Athenian general, statesman and orator, PERICLES, in one of his speeches against the revolt of Eubœa and Megara, two Grecian provinces, used the following remarkable language, and so singularly applicable to the present condition of things, in our country: "*No great Government can be respected, if fragment after fragment, may be detached from it, with impunity; if traitors are permitted to delude and discompose the contented, and to seduce the ignorant from their allegiance; if loyalty is a weakness, sedition a duty, conspiracy wisdom, and rebellion heroism!*"

The very idea of division brings to mind at once, a thousand causes that would lead to strife and war. One great inducement with those who formed the American Union was to prevent forever those intestine feuds, and ever present dangers which would spring up between independent States. Questions of boundary, of revenues, of large standing armies, of commerce on the sea and on the land, of the free navigation of our great rivers; these, and all other questions which from the beginning of time have been the foundation of national disputes and endless wars among the nations of the earth, would have existed in full force here. It is far better, if fight we must, to preserve the grandeur and glory of the nation, than by separation, to lay the foundation of perpetual strife with our posterity throughout all coming time.

Never, Mr. Chairman, in the history of the nation, was there a time when we so much needed prudent and wise counsellors as at the present hour. While our armies are advancing with success, and victory is shouted from every battle-field, a single false step taken here may convert all into "Dead sea fruit." Discarding all Utopian dogmas, let us look steadily and only to the maintenance of the authority of the General Government, and the preservation of the Federal Union.

"Let all the ends thou aimest at be thy country's."

Let not the people be deceived and deluded in regard to the objects of this war. Let us stand firmly by the resolution passed, with such great unanimity, at the extra session in July last:

"That this war is not waged on our part in any spirit of oppression, nor for any purpose of conquest or subjugation, nor purpose of overthrowing or interfering with the rights and established institutions of those States, but to defend and maintain the supremacy of the Constitution and to preserve the Union with all the dignity, equality, and rights of the several States unimpaired, and that as soon as these objects are accomplished the war ought to cease."

In most of what I have seen coming from the pen of the President of the United States since his inauguration—in his messages to Congress, in his instructions to our ministers abroad, and in the general influence and tendency of his administration, as so eloquently and ably shown by the gentleman from Indiana [Mr. VOORHEES] a few days since, I am cheered with the belief that he fully sanctions all that is contained in the foregoing resolution. In regard to the resolution which passed this House a few days since, and which accompanied the

special message of the President, while I thought its introduction ill-timed, there were nevertheless great principles recognized in it, which I cheerfully indorse:

1. That Congress has no constitutional power to interfere with the institution of slavery in any State where it exists.

2. That to the States themselves belong the *exclusive control* of the institution of slavery within their respective borders.

3. That if at any time the people of any State should choose to adopt a system of gradual emancipation, the General Government ought to extend pecuniary aid to compensate the owners of slaves for any losses which they might sustain growing out of the change of system.

I repeat that the principle of this resolution is right; the time of its introduction was unfortunate, and especially the indecent haste in which it was hurried through, without giving the Representatives from those States most deeply interested an opportunity even of consulting upon the subject. For one, I do not doubt the patriotic intentions of the President in sending here this message and resolution. I believe that *his* object was to check the progress of radical measures. The people watch with great anxiety the course of the Administration; and in order that the purposes of the President may be distinctly known, I shall take the liberty of re-quoting here some passages from his messages, and also from instructions given by him to our ministers abroad.

In his inaugural address, the President used the following language:

"Apprehension seems to exist among the people of the southern States, that, by the accession of a Republican Administration, their property and their peace and personal security are to be endangered. There has never been any reasonable cause for such apprehension. Indeed, the most ample evidence to the contrary has all the while existed, and been open to their inspection. It is found in nearly all the published speeches of him who now addresses you. I do but quote from one of those speeches, when I declare that 'I have no purpose, directly or indirectly, to interfere with the institution of slavery in the States where it exists.' I believe I have no lawful right to do so; and I have no inclination to do so. And, more than this, they placed in the platform, for my acceptance, and as a law to themselves and to me, the clear and emphatic resolution which I now read:

"*Resolved*, That the maintenance inviolate of the rights of the States, and especially the right of each State to order and control its own domestic institutions according to its own judgment exclusively, is essential to that balance of power on which the perfection and endurance of our political fabric depend; and we denounce the lawless invasion by armed force of the soil of any State or Territory, no matter under what pretext, as among the gravest of crimes."

"I now reiterate these sentiments; and in doing so I only press upon the public attention the most conclusive evidence of which the case is susceptible, that the property, peace, and security of no section are to be in anywise endangered by the now incoming Administration.

"I add, too, that all the protection which, consistently with the Constitution and the laws, can be given will be cheerfully given to all the States when lawfully demanded, for whatever cause, as cheerfully to one section as to another."

* * * * *

"I hold that in the contemplation of universal law and of the Constitution, the Union of these States is perpetual."

* * * * *

"It follows from these views that no State, upon its own mere motion, can lawfully get out of the Union; that resolves and ordinances to that effect are legally void; and that acts of violence within any State or States against the authority of the United States are insurrectionary or revolutionary, according to circumstances.

"I therefore consider, that, in view of the Constitution and the laws, the Union is unbroken."

In the message the President laid before Congress at the special session in July last, he referred back to these just and pointed declarations, and applied them expressly to the condition of the rebel States after the rebellion should be suppressed. With most wise and fortunate anticipation he then said:

"Lest there be some uneasiness in the minds of candid men as to what is to be the course of the Government towards the southern States after the rebellion shall have been suppressed, the Executive deems it proper to say it will be his purpose then, as ever, to be guided by the Constitution and the laws; and that he will probably have no different understanding of the powers and duties of the Federal Government relatively to the rights of the States and the people under the Constitution than that expressed in the inaugural address."

This is full and explicit. It is unmistakable. It leaves no room for doubt.

In strict conformity to this view, Mr. Seward, in his letter of instructions, in April last, to Mr. Dayton, our minister at Paris, said :

"I need not further elaborate the proposition that the revolution is without a cause; it has not even a pretext.

"It is just as clear that it is without an object. Moral and physical causes have determined inflexibly the character of each one of the Territories over which the dispute has arisen, and both parties after the election harmoniously agreed on all the Federal laws required for their organization. The Territories will remain in all respects the same whether the revolution shall succeed or shall fail. The condition of slavery in the several States will remain just the same whether it succeed or fail. There is not even a pretext for the complaint that the disaffected States are to be conquered by the United States if the revolution fail; for the rights of the States and the condition of every human being in them will remain subject to exactly the same laws and forms of administration whether the revolution shall succeed or fail. In the one case the States would be federally connected with the new confederacy; in the other they would, as now, be members of the United States; but their constitutions and laws, customs, habits, and institutions, in either case, will remain the same.

"It is hardly necessary to add to this incontestible statement the further fact that the new President, as well as the citizens through whose suffrages he has come into the Administration, has always repudiated all designs whatever and whenever imputed to him and them of disturbing the system of slavery as it is existing under the Constitution and laws. The case, however, would not be fully presented if I were to omit to say that any such effort on his part would be unconstitutional; and all his actions in that direction would be prevented by the judicial authority, even though they were assented to by Congress and the people."

Of the same tenor are Mr. Seward's instructions on this point to our minister at London in the same month of the same year. I make the following pregnant extracts from this elaborate paper :

"The movement, therefore, in the opinion of the President, tends directly to anarchy in the seceding States, as similar movements in similar circumstances have already resulted in Spanish America, and especially in Mexico. He believes, nevertheless, that the citizens of those States, as well as the citizens of the other States, are too intelligent, considerate, and wise to follow the leaders to that disastrous end. For these reasons, he would not be disposed to reject a cardinal dogma of theirs, namely, that the Federal Government could not reduce the seceding States to obedience by conquest, even although he were disposed to question that proposition. But, in fact, the President willingly accepts it as true. Only an imperial or despotic Government could subjugate thoroughly disaffected and insurrectionary members of the State. This Federal, republican system of ours is, of all forms of government, the very one which is most unfitted for such a labor. Happily, however, this is only an imaginary defect. The system has within itself adequate, peaceful, conservative, and recuperative forces."

* * * * *

"You will indulge in no expressions of harshness or disrespect, or even impatience, concerning the seceded States, their agents, or their people; but you will, on the contrary, all the while remember that those States are now, as they always heretofore have been, and, notwithstanding their temporary self-delusion, they must always continue to be, equal and honored members of this Federal Union, and that their citizens, throughout all political misunderstandings and alienations, still are, and always must be, our kindred and countrymen."

These views are sound, and must be indorsed by every just-thinking man. Surrounded as he is by the greatest difficulties and with responsibilities resting upon him that no other President ever had, it is right for me to express the conviction that from all I have seen of him and heard from him, Abraham Lincoln is governed by a sincere and patriotic desire to save the Constitution

AS IT IS, and to prevent the overthrow of the Government. To him the people look, and in their behalf I make the appeal, not only to him, but to that large, controlling, and conservative element in the Republican party which elected him to stand by their country, and to prevent those excesses in legislation which must not only tend to prolong the war, enlarge the proportions of this already overgrown rebellion, and lay the foundation, eternal and enduring, of the most relentless and bitter hatred betwixt the two sections of the country.

Acting upon the theory that the Federal Union remains unbroken, that all ordinances passed for this purpose are unconstitutional, and therefore null and void, that the authority of the Government is only for the time being suspended in those States that have seceded, and that all laws passed by Congress will, in the end, be observed and executed in those States, it is at once apparent that with the accumulated debt of the rebellion in the southern States, superadded to their full proportion of the taxes which must be levied to pay the expenses of the war and to sustain the public credit, that their burdens for years to come must be very oppressive, far more so than those of the people of the loyal States.

How far and in what form either the principles of justice or of necessity shall require these people to be subjected to still further exactions, become questions of the gravest importance, and requiring the forecast and sound judgment of the most experienced statesmanship. Shall they be required, in common parlance, to "foot the bill," and to pay all the expenses occasioned by this wicked revolt? Will you pass laws confiscating the property of all those who have taken up arms against the Government, and who have in any way given "aid and comfort" to the rebellion? Will you pass acts emancipating the slaves in the southern States? Will you even go so far as to pass laws emancipating the slaves of those who have been actively engaged in the rebellion? Will you blot out State lines, as has been proposed in the other end of the Capitol, and convert the whole southern country into territorial dependencies, to be controlled and governed by officers appointed by the General Government?

Mr. Chairman, upon the answer to these solemn questions hangs yet the destiny of the nation. If in the affirmative, then the Government is lost, and the sun of liberty will go down upon this continent in a sea of blood! Perhaps, sir, I owe as little to secession as any other member on this floor. The sanctity of my hearthstone has been violated, and my rights trampled under foot by these lawless men. But rising above all questions of personal feeling and party animosity, and looking alone to the safety of my country and the welfare of the whole people, I am at present opposed to any and all of these extreme measures. They cannot be adopted without doing the greatest injustice to thousands of faithful Union men to be found in every southern State, and who, with grateful hearts, will gladly welcome the old flag, that bright "banner of beauty and of glory," and dedicate their lives to its defence whenever they may dare to do so. Our first and highest duty is to suppress the rebellion, and whatever legislation may be necessary within our constitutional power to do this, *let it be had*.

Further than this, it is needless, nay, it is dangerous, to go *now*. Let us await the "tide of events," take counsel of our respective constituencies, ponder upon the "sober second thought," and in the future, with that experience which the changed circumstances of the country will bring to us, we shall be the better able to devise a system of laws that will do injustice to no one, tend to reunite the people of the whole Union, soften the asperities of the present hour, and bring about once more that kind and fraternal feeling, the loss of which is so much to be deplored by every Christian heart. To the extent that the laws of the country have been violated, let the guilty leaders be punished; they

must not escape; but extend to the masses, who have been deluded and misled, pardon and amnesty, upon the condition that they will return to their loyalty and "sin no more," remembering always that the law inflicts its punishment upon the guilty citizen, not so much to reform the offender as to prevent a repetition of the crime. Let it not be said, Mr. Chairman, that the policy which I indicate is too gentle in times of disaster and revolution like these.—We must look to the *effect* which any system of laws that we may enact will have upon the country.

My motto is, "save the nation at any cost;" but believing as I do that the Constitution affords us the amplest power to do this, I am utterly opposed to its violation. Let it not be said, either, that I am governed by any purpose to shield and protect any interest which comes in contact with the *safety of the Republic* and the integrity of the Union. In regard to African slavery, I value far higher the permanency of the Government and the preservation of the Constitution—for these are essential to *our own liberties*—than I do any question connected with the freedom or slavery of this inferior race of men. I desire to preserve the Government as it is, and to do this, I am for using all necessary powers granted in the Constitution, executive, legislative, and judicial. But, sir, I do not wish to see the public mind agitated, and the nation's life still further endangered, not only by the pressure upon us of unconstitutional, but of idle *humanitarian theories, and abstract opinions*. And least of all, if the nation must die, let there not be written upon its tomb the epitaph: "Here lies a great people, who, in their efforts to give freedom to the African slave on this continent, *lost their own liberties!*"

Mr. Chairman, I can hardly presume that we shall ever have again in this country, or at least for many years to come, the same pleasant and agreeable condition of things which existed before the commencement of this wicked rebellion. This war, however, cannot last always. It must terminate, and, I sincerely trust, before a great while. It is a question of the deepest magnitude, and especially in those States where the rebellion exists, how matters are to be adjusted so as to produce the least possible sacrifice of the business interests of the country, and as little alienation among the great masses of the people.—Unless this be our object, *a state of peace may be made more terrible even than a state of war*. In a short time we hope, under the lead of her distinguished son, that Tennessee, thrust out of the Union temporarily against the wishes of a large majority of her people, will return to assume her vacant seats in this Hall. And how are her representatives to be met, upon their entrance into this body? Will it be as men coming from a coequal State, with all its "rights and dignity unimpaired?" Shall we meet them at the threshold with manifestations of joy? Shall the "fatted calf be killed?" Or are they to be told that they have returned *too late*; that Tennessee is no longer a State of the American Union; that we have, under the "war power," blotted out its existence, and converted it into a territorial dependency? Shall we attempt to console them with the idea that we had sent to them as their Governor some man of that extreme political school who originated the idea of destroying their State sovereignty, and blotting out State lines, and that their offices of honor and of profit were to be filled by the same class of men? Shall we tell them, furthermore, that in order to preserve among them the most agreeable and harmonious state of society, we had passed laws confiscating the property of one half of their inhabitants? Shall we say to them, still further, that, acting upon the theory of the gentleman from Kansas, [Mr. CONWAY,] "that by the act of secession they had dissolved the Union," we had treated them as "belligerents," under the law of nations, and, availing ourselves of these changed relations, we had broken up one of their established institutions, by emancipating all their slaves, amounting to two hundred and eighty thousand in number? That in

this, however, we had acted a very generous part toward them; that we do not intend to remove this servile race from among them; that they will still remain their neighbors and friends, and that when they get them thoroughly educated and Christianized, they would make most agreeable members of society! And that, in order most effectually to prevent them from leaving the territory, the northern States had commenced the passage of laws, and inserting into their respective State constitutions such amendments as these:

"ART. XIII.—SEC. 1. No negro or mulatto shall come into or settle in this State, after the adoption of this constitution.

"SEC. 2. All contracts made with any negro or mulatto coming into the State, contrary to the provision of the foregoing section, shall be void; and any person who shall employ such negro or mulatto, or otherwise encourage him to remain in the State, shall be fined in any sum not less than ten dollars nor more than \$500."—*Constitution of Indiana.*

In the Constitution adopted by the convention lately held in Illinois, we find the following provision:

"ART. XVIII.—SEC. 1. No negro or mulatto shall migrate to or settle in this State, after the adoption of this constitution.

"SEC. 2. No negro or mulatto shall have the right of suffrage or hold any office in this State.

"SEC. 3. The General Assembly shall pass all laws necessary to carry into effect the provision of this article."

Is this your plan of reconstruction? Is this the way you expect to save the Constitution and the Union? Is this the way you expect to win and, in the language of my good friend, (Mr. CRITTENDEN,) "woo back" the people of the southern States? What! break up their State organizations, destroy forever their domestic tranquility, beggar them and their children, and yet expect them to return to their allegiance and become again peaceful and patriotic citizens? Sir, I ask is not this the *ne plus ultra* of human folly? I beseech you to abandon these unwise and impracticable measures. You have made by law the capital of the nation free! Be content. Let there be no further congressional agitation of the question of slavery. Leave this question for all future time to the people of the States where it exists, and to be disposed of by them as they may deem best for the welfare of all concerned. Sir, I listened with infinite satisfaction to the able argument of the learned gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. THOMAS) a few days since against these extreme measures. I cordially indorse almost his entire speech. With such Republicans as himself, and of my friends from Indiana (Mr. DUNN) and from New York, (Mr. DIVEN) and many others that I could name, my constituents could live, ay, and all the reasonable people of the South could live, upon terms of the most enduring friendship. Let the wisdom of such men guide and control the action of the dominant party here, and all will yet be well.

Mr. Chairman, we were treated a short time ago, by the gentleman from Pennsylvania, (Mr. DAVIS,) to a disquisition upon the dignity of labor. Sir, this a noble theme, and if he had confined himself to the subject without going out of his way to make an onslaught upon the loyal people of the southern States, there was much which he said that met my hearty indorsement. Sir, I honor and respect the laboring man; to him is our country, in a large degree, indebted for its rapid advancement in physical, moral, and mental improvement; and there is no better specimen of manhood to be found, and no higher and more admirable illustration of the beneficent influence of our free institutions than that of the man who by his own labor rises from the humbler to the higher walks of life; and I care not in what department or in what direction these beneficial results of labor may be directed. And allow me to say sir, that these liberal sentiments are largely entertained by the people in that section of the country where I live. The gentleman from Pennsylvania, while

leveling his malice at the border slave States, seemed to think that the only motive which prompted them to adhere to the Union was in order that their institution of slavery might be made more secure!

Sir, I am ready to confess that I believe slavery to be more secure in the Union than it would be out of it, and especially so if we are to have such men as the gentleman from Pennsylvania for our neighbors. But how unkind; oh! how uncharitable, to attribute a motive like this to the brave and loyal men who have risked their all in endeavoring to put down this rebellion. Is not their love of country as sincere, and their motives of action as pure and honorable, as those that guide and control the citizens of other States? Such attacks at this time are out of place here. They reach back to the foundation of the Government. They are aimed equally at the memories of many of those who aided in its establishment—Washington and Jefferson, Madison, Clay, and Jackson, were not only southern men, but they were all slave owners. While, if you will trace the history of slavery on this continent, you will find that the people of the northern States were as largely instrumental, and profited as much in the establishment of African slavery here as did the southern people. Whatever guilt attaches to it in a moral or political point of view, it must be forever shared, and equally by the North and by the South. Sir, the great men of the South need no defence at my hands. There is not a page in your country's history that is not illuminated and adorned by their wisdom, their patriotism, and their valor. From the time that the first blow was struck in the cause of American independence, until the breaking out of this "accursed rebellion," there is scarcely a battle-field whose sands were not moistened by the blood of patriotic southern men. To them the world is largely indebted for the establishment of free government on this continent. And the cause of humanity and liberty in the distant regions of the earth have had no truer and warmer advocates than southern men in this Capitol, and whose eloquent words come

"So softly, that like flakes of feathered snow,
They melted as they fell."

No, sir, the Union men of the border slave States, estimating at their true value all the blessings conferred upon them by the Union, regarding the Federal Constitution and the Government established under it as the best ever instituted among men, following the teachings of the Father of his Country, and desiring to hand down to their children these priceless gifts, they have and are now risking all that is dear to them for its preservation, and but for whose action this day the Government would inevitably have been destroyed. And these croakings come with bad grace, especially from those whose action has contributed so much to the present unfortunate state of things, and who setting aside the Constitution as their guide and rule of action, are pressing upon us daily the most absurd propositions, the success of which must at once destroy the last vestige of hope for the reconstruction and salvation of the Government.

(Here the hammer of the Chairman fell, the hour having expired.)

MR. DUNN, of Indiana. Mr. Chairman, I move that the gentleman from Missouri be allowed to proceed with his remarks, and that his time be extended.

THE CHAIRMAN. If there be no objection, the gentleman from Missouri will continue his remarks.

There being no objection, Mr. ROLLINS said:

I will detain the committee but a short time longer. Mr. Chairman, it has been charged here that Kentucky desired to dictate the policy of the nation! Sir, I love and honor the people of that noble and proud old Commonwealth. It is the land of my birth. Beneath her sacred soil rests the ashes of the immortal Clay. It is the home of Crittenden, and I trust I shall ever be

as sensitive in regard to her reputation as the brave and true men around me, who so faithfully represent her interests here. Where are the evidences of the truth of this charge? Sir, they do not exist. Kentucky does not wish to dictate the policy of the nation further than to keep the nation right. At the commencement of this rebellion Kentucky did all in her power to preserve the peace and prevent this fratricidal war. In the councils of the nation and before the assemblies of the people she plead with all the earnest enthusiasm of a warm hearted patriotism; she offered to the nation, through her illustrious son, terms of conciliation and compromise, which ought to have been accepted. But her voice was unheeded. Neither section would listen to her timely and generous appeals. Strife and bitterness seemed to have filled the hearts of men on every side.

Yet Kentucky did not falter; seeing the danger of her own position, and knowing that her fair fields would be the inevitable theater upon which the heavy clash of arms would first be felt, and realizing the natural sympathies of her own people with the southern States, and the misrepresentations by which bold leaders and crafty traitors expected to mislead the honest masses, the loyal men of Kentucky had a most difficult and critical duty to discharge. With what fidelity and good judgment she met the crisis, let the history of passing events tell. No crimes or blunders were committed by her true sons. Rejecting all false theories springing out of the secession movement, forgetting the sympathies which were appealed to in order to enlist her in the southern cause, rising to a true national position, and planting herself upon the bulwarks of the Federal Constitution, she threw off her neutrality, unsheathed her sword, and by the side of the gallant men who flocked to her rescue, from Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and other loyal States, she bid defiance to traitors, and proclaimed, in the language of the immortal Jackson: "The Federal Union, it must be preserved." Upon the crimson fields of Wildcat, of Somerset, of Fort Henry, of Fort Donelson, and Pittsburg Landing, she illustrated anew her deep devotion to the cause of constitutional liberty.

No, sir; Kentucky has not attempted or desired to dictate the policy of the nation in this terrible crisis. She has done her whole duty under the most trying and difficult circumstances that ever surrounded a brave and chivalrous people; with true and filial devotion she has bared her bosom, and received the blow which was intended for the heart of the nation; poised upon her own great centers of truth and loyalty, she has resisted every appeal made to her by recreant sons, and stood as a wall of fire to check the encroachments of those whose purpose was to destroy the nation. What I have said of Kentucky is equally true of the other border slave States—Maryland, Western Virginia, Delaware, and Missouri. They regard American nationality as the precious casket in which is contained the priceless gift of free institutions, and they would regard themselves as alike recreant to their generation, to posterity, and to struggling humanity throughout the world, if they failed to do their part towards preserving and transmitting unimpaired to future generations, this sacred and invaluable trust.

Sir, whatever others may have done, or may yet do, to uphold and maintain the Government and the Constitution, the loyal men of the border slave States, as long as time shall last and free institutions be prized among men, will be remembered and honored for their heroic courage and devoted patriotism. Like poor old Lear, they have withstood the "peltings of the pitiless storm" that raged around them; have checked and rolled back the mad waves of passion and prejudice which were sweeping with desolating fury over the land, and threatening to engulf all that was most precious on this continent. For the sake of their country and its free institutions they have sacrificed their material interests, broken the tenderest ties of family and of social life, and determined

either to perish or to save from dismemberment and ruin the Union and the Constitution, threatened by the fierce assaults of ambitious leaders and their deluded and misguided followers. And, sir, as long as a love of liberty and of free government shall find a lodgment in the hearts of men, the names of Johnson, of Etheridge, of Prentice, of Guthrie, of Davis, of Gamble, of Bates, of Phelps, and though last, yet first, of my venerable friend who sits before me, [Mr. CRITTENDEN,] will be associated with the founders of republican government on this continent.

Mr. Chairman, I fear the end is not yet. My mind alternating betwixt hope and fear, I put my faith upon the patriotism and good sense of the great majority of the American people, and the kindness of that good Providence that has thus far watched over and guided our country through all the dangers which have beset us:

"A thousand years scarce serve to form a State,
An hour may lay it in the dust; and when
Can man its shattered splendor renovate,
Recall its virtues back, and vanquish time and fate?"

What we most need in the present hour is calm and prudent counsels in our legislative halls. I am sincere in the belief that the Government is in more danger from the indiscreet action of impracticable politicians and misguided theorists than from any failure of our arms. What we want is a great Union conservative party, made up from all other parties, within whose folds may be gathered the good men of the nation, North and South, planted firmly on the Constitution, and determined to resist and to overthrow the aggressions of extremists, and, by a liberal and beneficent policy, win back the wandering children of the Republic to their duty and their loyalty.

Sir, if my poor voice could reach our distant brethren in the South, I would ask each and every one of them, what has the South gained by secession? What has any one southern State gained by secession? What has any one individual in all the South gained by secession? Has it or is it likely to give to them a better form of government? Is their property more secure? Has it brought peace and happiness to their firesides, prosperity to their business? Have they profited in any respect by this movement? On the contrary, have not the ambitious leaders who put on foot this rebellion, contrary to the wishes and better judgment of the masses, brought bankruptcy, ruin, and desolation upon the entire South? There never was, so far as I know, a single solitary meeting of the people asking a change of Government. The movement did not originate with the people themselves. They are patriotic. It originated with Davis and his traitorous crew in this Capitol. And oh!

"Is there not some chosen curse,
Some hidden thunder in the stores of Heaven,
Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man
Who owes his greatness to his country's ruin?"

The masses were happy and contented, satisfied with their Government as it was. Living under the protection and benign influence of a free Constitution and wholesome laws, they asked for no change, they wanted none, and they are now sighing for the old order of things. This monstrous crime of involving the country in rebellion and war lies at the door of uneasy and discontented politicians, reckless and maddened leaders, and was gotten up to promote their own reckless and selfish ends. A day of terrible retribution awaits them. Like Actæon, in heathen mythology, they will, in the end, be destroyed by their own friends. The loyal citizens of the South, deceived and betrayed, will in due season turn upon them and punish them for their crimes; while the great and beneficent Government, the glory and admiration of every loyal American heart, planted amidst all the perils and dangers of our revolutionary conflict, will

exert its authority throughout the length and breadth of the nation, and our hearts will be once more cheered and animated at the sight of the "old flag," baptized, as it will have been, in fire and blood, planted *securely* upon every mountain top and in every valley, from the Atlantic to the Pacific coast.

Mr. Chairman, the effect of this revolution will be to settle, and forever, certain dangerous theories springing out of our form of government, and tending constantly to a collision between the State and national authorities.

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in its head."

The nation has been convulsed to its centre; thousands of true and brave men have been sacrificed in the contest; we have created a national debt which will be a heavy burden to the present and to several generations which will come after us; but all these are as nothing compared with the value of the life of the nation. The people will not murmur if the Constitution is preserved, and our matchless form of government not seriously impaired. They will feel assured that no such revolution will be attempted again for "light and transient causes." They will feel their faith greatly strengthened in *republican institutions*.

The experiment will have been thoroughly tested as to the ability of the people to govern themselves. And,

"When wild war's deadly blast is o'er,"

and the angel of peace shall once more spread his bright wings across the continent, starting afresh in the race of nations, and purified by the severe ordeal through which we have been compelled to pass, we will be a wiser, a better, and a stronger people; and when men have returned to the peaceful pursuits of private life, and society shall have assumed again the steady forms of law and order, the energies of the masses will be unchained in new fields of enterprise that will lure them on to reinstate their fortunes, and despite the terrors and calamities of the frightful and unnatural revolution through which we are now passing, our great nation, with the strength of a young giant, will at one bound assume its lost position, and go forward in the march of improvement in a manner that will eclipse even our former unparalleled success; and before the close of the present century, in all the elements of power and of national strength, and in our contributions to science and literature, to art, to arms, to commerce, to manufactures, to agriculture, we will assume a position second to no other civilized nation in the world.

Mr. Charman, in casting our eyes across the beautiful valley westward, we behold a vast but unfinished monument, intended by his affectionate countrymen to perpetuate a lively recollection of the virtues and character of Washington. Each State of the American Union has contributed a part of the material of which this beautiful shaft is built. From one a block of limestone, from another a block of marble, from another a block of granite, from another a block of quartz, sprinkled with gold. The motto of the great State that I have the honor, in part, to represent in this Hall, is, "*United we stand; divided we fall*," and in her contribution to the Washington monument she has sent here a block of solid iron, carved from her own great mountain, typical of her vast mineral resources, and of her strength and power when these resources are fully developed, and indicating further that, as iron is more durable than marble or granite, so Missouri will be *more* steadfast in maintaining the UNION of these States, and in preserving the CONSTITUTION and GOVERNMENT which WASHINGTON gave to us.



